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BOOK REVIEWS

A History of Education before the Middle Ages. By FRANK PIERREPONT GRAVES, PH.D. New York: Macmillan, 1909. Pp. 304. \$1.10.

This book is not of the skimmed-milk, peptonized type of elementary history of education nor does it present an abstract history of philosophy for beginning students as does Davidson's otherwise admirable work. It is also free from the petty criticisms of great educational systems and the ideas of great thinkers that are so disgusting in some histories of education.

The chief topics to be considered, according to the author, are aim, content, method, and organization of education in each nation and period considered. This plan is followed throughout but a large proportion of the space is in every case given to historical facts showing the origin of educational ideals and aims. As in all other histories of education many of the facts given, although of significance to general history, have no direct bearing upon the problem of education.

This book, like nearly all others, does not in the opinion of the present writer give sufficient prominence to the more or less unconscious and unintentional education that is given the members of each new generation through their contact with the occupations, institutions, and traditions of their people. For similar reasons the intentional teaching of the young by directing their activity in accordance with the national needs, customs, and ideals does not seem to be appreciated at its full value. It is perhaps only natural that we who have always associated education with book learning cannot fully appreciate the most valuable features of such education as that carried on by the Greeks.

The matter is well arranged in topics and the facts are presented with clearness and accuracy. Part 1 treats of non-progressive education and Part 2 of the beginnings of individualism in education. After considering education among savages and peoples of primitive civilization the author treats of education in the historical nations of Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Phoenicia, China, Persia, Israel, Sparta, Athens, and Rome. The last chapter treats of early Christian education.

A writer of a history of education, like the good biographer, should be primarily appreciative and only secondarily critical. This Dr. Graves is to a greater extent than many other writers, yet the good points of the systems considered might have been brought out with greater clearness. The criticism of the education of any nation should not be based on present ideals and practices as is usually the case with most writers. The true basis of criticism is the correspondence or lack of correspondence between the aims of an educational system and the means used for attaining those ends. Only when one realizes that the ideal of the people of China was not like our own, one of progress, but of preserving everything as it had been, can he appreciate how admirably suited was the old Chinese system of education for the attainment of the desired end. One of the results of the study of the history of education should be

to see more clearly the aims of modern education and judge more accurately how well our studies and methods are suited to the attaining of those ends.

Since to present clearly the historical facts that reveal education as a phase of the history of civilization is utterly impossible in a brief work designed for beginning students, it is the opinion of the present writer that the author of an introductory history of education is justified in overemphasizing the peculiarities of the ideals and practices of each nation in order to make the pictures more distinct. Dr. Graves is more careful than most such writers as to his historical facts but he fails as a literary artist in making the characteristics of each educational system stand out with sufficient distinctness to strongly impress elementary students. Considered in all respects, however, the book will rank high among histories of education.

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The "Appleton" Arithmetics. Primary book. By J. W. A. YOUNG AND LAMBERT L. JACKSON. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1909. Pp. 264.

"To teach arithmetic from the standpoint of the child," is the purpose this book sets itself. A broad purpose; indeed, is it very well possible in our days to *teach* anything from any standpoint, but that of the ones to be *taught*? The purpose is so broad, however, that further specification is necessary for a thorough understanding of the aim. What is the "standpoint of the child," with respect to arithmetic? Has it been clearly understood? What is there in the child's experience, that seems to call for arithmetic? In how far, or in what ways can arithmetic contribute to the unfolding and testing of the child's powers? Does it not seem necessary to answer these and many other related questions, in a somewhat definite fashion, before it can become clear, what we mean when we speak about the "standpoint of the child" with respect to arithmetic?

Perhaps the raising of these questions sends us out into terra incognita; at any rate, they open a broad field for scientific activity: to devise methods of investigation by means of which they may be adequately answered, to carry on such investigations in the classroom, and to put together manuals to be given to the children whose adaptability for arithmetic teaching we are trying to learn.

The *Appleton Arithmetics* are not intended for such purposes, however; they take for granted that the child's standpoint with respect to arithmetic is what it has generally been taken to be—eagerness to learn the fundamental processes on whole numbers and simple fractions, and their applications. They are "conservative, but not reactive. They represent what is sane in quality and safe in quantity for everyday classroom use under average conditions." They rather make fruitful use of the experience of the last ten years, then consciously try to gather new experience. They will contribute in a large fashion to bring into general application some of the things which have thus far been used by the people of advanced thought in education.

Every process, every idea is introduced by some "preparatory work," concrete in nature and intended to lead to an abstraction. Then follow, in many